

# Carolina Communicator

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## Folkerts named dean of the School

By John Kuka

After 27 years and two occupants, the dean's suite will have a new tenant.

Jean Folkerts, professor of honors and of media and public affairs at George Washington University, has been selected to become the next dean of the School. She will begin work in the School in early June and will officially take over from Interim Dean Tom Bowers July 1. Folkerts will also hold the title Alumni Distinguished Professor in recognition of career accomplishments to date.

"Jean Folkerts is an experienced administrator who was well received by faculty, students, alumni and others during the schoolwide review process of the finalists," said Chancellor James Moeser.

"Jean has demonstrated a broad depth of knowledge about the rapidly changing field of journalism and mass communication, especially the role that electronic media will continue to play in informing key audiences," he said. "We are proud of the School's sterling national reputation, and I have every confidence that under Jean's leadership the school will remain arguably the very best."

Moeser announced Folkerts' selection during a Faculty Council meeting February 24. The University's Board of Trustees approved her selection during its meeting March 24.

Folkerts joined George Washington's Media and Public Affairs program in 1990. She served as director of the School of Media and Public Affairs from 1996 to 2001, interim dean of Columbian College of Arts and Sciences from 2001 to 2002, and associate vice president of special academic initiatives after 2003.

Folkerts, the School's first female dean, said she jumped at the chance to

lead the School after a colleague nominated her for the position.

"The School is exceptionally strong," she said. "It is anchored in one of the best public institutions in the country, and it has been recognized by the professional accrediting association as 'arguably the best.' Its strength is demonstrated by the quality of its faculty, its students, its alumni network and its facilities."

Folkerts said she would miss George Washington, but the university post she currently holds left her hoping to return to journalism-mass communication.

"I had enjoyed being director of the School of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington and then had moved into upper administration," she said. "But I found that I missed being involved in journalism and mass communication education. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has a national reputation for being the best journalism and mass communication school in the country."

"I simply could not pass up the opportunity to help create a vision for the future for a school with such an established reputation and with the potential to set the standard for journalism and communication education for the decades to come."

Folkerts brings a wealth of classroom and administrative experience to the School. In 2001, the Freedom Forum, a nonpartisan foundation, named Folkerts the Teacher of the Year for excellence in the teaching of media history. *The Topeka* (Kan.) *Capital-Journal* also recognized her among the 2001 Kansans of Distinction for excellence in media and journalism. She also worked as a professional journalist, experience she said will help her as dean.

"A School of Journalism and Mass Communication combines professional education with liberal arts in



Photo by Dan Sears

Jean Folkerts joins the School in July as the next dean. Folkerts will serve on the faculty as Alumni Distinguished Professor.

an academic setting," Folkerts said. "A good leader needs experience that comes from academic and professional work. My professional and academic work will help me create a balanced approach that combines elements from

both worlds."

And Folkerts plans to lead in several ways.

She said the people in the School

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## School hosts Arab journalists through Murrow Program

By Caroline K. Hauser

The School's Freedom Forum lived up to its name when it hosted several days of lively discussion among professors, Board of Visitors members and 14 Arab journalists in mid-April.

The international visitors came to Chapel Hill as part of the Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists. The program, sponsored by seven journalism schools, the Aspen Institute and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, allowed 124 journalists from more than 100 countries to interact with U.S. scholars and media professionals during a three-week visit.

The 14 journalists who came to the School represented the Near East

and included representatives from Lebanon, Gaza, Kuwait, Iraq and Algeria.

"When we started planning this program, I knew it was going to be extremely interesting and important, but I had no idea it was going to be such a life-changing experience for me," interim dean Tom Bowers said. "We Americans are learning as much as they are."

Similarly, the journalists learned from each other. "It's interesting to hear the discussion among the group," said Nordin Ghoudani, editor in chief of *Mzine*, a magazine published in the Netherlands. "We are all Arab journalists, but we have different views."

Those views emerged in sessions

about media law and ethics, business reporting, the newspaper industry and convergence. Pulitzer Prize winner and Board of Visitors member Doug Marlette led a session on editorial cartooning.

"We need to get to the point where we're drawing incendiary cartoons instead of blowing people up," Marlette said.

He showed a sample of his political cartoons, but found some of the meaning was lost in translation. After explaining the cultural references behind a sketch of President Bush singing, "Might as well face it, we're addicted to oil," and the phrase "Shiite happens," he joked, "I have to do this with editors all the time."

"It's interesting to see how much

knowledge of history and culture this requires when you strip it down and try to explain it," he added. "It really shows the complexity of communication." When he got to a cartoon referencing Andy Griffith Show character Barney Fife, Marlette clicked through. "It requires too much explanation," he said.

Explaining the process behind a free press proved equally complex. After seeing several cartoons of Bush, Egyptian economic reporter Heba Philip Zaki Michael said, "We have three taboos in our press—politics, religion and sex—so I can't imagine an Arab king being portrayed in a satirical way."

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